

# Campaspe:

## A snapshot of our Shire

2024-2025



**Campaspe**  
Shire Council

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## Foreword

### About this report

The purpose of this report is to provide a snapshot of Campaspe Shire. It is designed to support community members in understanding what the Council does, the different services and facilities and some of the challenges for the future.

This report covers topics focusing on people and community, land use, industry and employment, environment and sustainability, services and facilities, and transport and access.

### A note for the reader

This document draws upon various reliable sources, including previous council reports, census data, and strategic plans.

However, it is important to recognise a few limitations:

- As a high-level summary, this report may not explore every issue in depth, meaning some details could be beyond its scope.
- The data used in the report reflects the time of publication of the original sources, some information may not fully reflect recent changes or developments.
- This document seeks to provide a factual foundation to support community conversation. It therefore may not capture the full diversity of experiences and perspectives across all community groups and members.


### First Nations Acknowledgement

The Shire of Campaspe is the traditional lands of the Dja Dja Wurrung, Taungurung and Yorta Yorta peoples. We respect and acknowledge their unique Aboriginal cultural heritage and pay our respect to their ancestors, descendants and emerging leaders as the Traditional Owners of this country.


We acknowledge their living culture and their unique role in the life of this region.

People and community


Who are we?




The Shire of Campaspe has a population of 38,299 (as of 2023), expected to increase to 43,000 by 2036.




Campaspe has a nearly equal gender distribution, with 49.3% male, and 50.7% female.




Campaspe has an older population, with a median age of 47 compared to 38 in Victoria.




Campaspe has a strong and rich Aboriginal culture, with 3% of the population Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander. The Campaspe Shire incorporates three Traditional Owner Groups: Dja Dja Wurrung, Taungurung; and Yorta Yorta.




Most people in Campaspe speak English only (89.2%), compared to 67.2% in Victoria.



The top languages spoken at home other than English are Italian (0.5%), Filipino (0.4%) and Tagalog (0.3%).




The top religious affiliations of residents are Catholic (21%), Anglican (12.3%) and the Uniting Church (6.5%).




Fewer people have completed Year 12 in Campaspe (34.9%) compared to Victoria (59.5%).

How do we live?




Households purchasing or fully owning their home

70%  
Campaspe




Earn low income (of less than \$500 per week)

35.5% 32.5%  
Campaspe Victoria




Couple families with children

23.4% 30.9%  
Campaspe Victoria




Renting

17.3%  
Campaspe




Earn high income (of \$2000 per week or more)

5.8% 12.3%  
Campaspe Victoria




Couple without children

29.6% 24.6%  
Campaspe Victoria




In social housing

3.6%  
Campaspe




A lower unemployment rate

3.5% 5%  
Campaspe Victoria



Lone-person households

27.7% 24.7%  
Campaspe Victoria



One-parent families

10.1% 10.2%  
Campaspe Victoria

How is our health and wellbeing?



Overall, the Campaspe community performs more strongly in some areas, including the intake of vegetables and fruits, but some challenges need to be addressed, including our higher rates of potentially dangerous levels in alcohol intake, the numbers of people who are overweight or obese, and food insecurity (Table 1).



Campaspe is part of the Loddon Mallee Public Health Unit (LMPHU) under the Victorian Department of Health, which aims to prevent and manage disease in the region. It was established in 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The LMPHU covers nine Local Government Areas (LGAs), including Buloke, Campaspe, Gannawarra, Greater Bendigo, Loddon, Macedon Ranges, Mildura, Mount Alexander and Swan Hill.



The Campaspe community is generally more active than the average Victorian, with 55.4% meeting adult physical activity guidelines<sup>1</sup>, compared in 48.1% in Victoria. Women (58.2%) are more likely to meet physical activity guidelines compared to men (53.2%). Time was identified as the greatest barrier to physical activity, and 52.9% of people in Campaspe want to do more physical activity than they are currently.



Murray Primary Health Network supports communities that live along the Murray River, and into the centre of Victoria. Its strategic health priorities focus on the health issues that have the greatest impact on the lives of these communities.



In terms of wellbeing, most residents report feeling satisfied with life and valued by society. However, 6.2% report having low life satisfaction, compared to 5.7% in Victoria. More women (7.5%) report lower life satisfaction than men (4.7%). Amongst young people, more girls report lower life satisfaction and not being valued compared to boys. Among older Australians, more men report lower life satisfaction and not being valued, compared to women.


The Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan was developed by Council in 2020 to describe the strategic planning approach to address challenges and integrate planning for health and wellbeing for Campaspe. It focuses on enhancing physical activity, food security, equitable service access and reducing tobacco-related harm in Campaspe. It takes a community-centric approach to collaborate with health organisations, community groups, and local stakeholders.

<sup>1</sup>It is recommended for adults (18 to 64 years), to do either 2.5 to 5 hours of moderate intensity physical activity weekly, or 1.25 to 2.5 hours of vigorous intensity physical activity weekly, or an equivalent combination of moderate and vigorous activities, according to the Australian Physical Activity and Exercise Guidelines.

	Residents who assess their health as good or very good	Eat five or more serves of vegetables per day	Eat two serves of fruit per day	Daily consumer of sugar sweetened soft drink
Campaspe	46.2%	12.5%	45.7%	15.5%
Loddon Campaspe Region	44.1%	13.3%	48%	14%
Victoria	44.1%	4.9%	42.9%	11.2%

	Drink alcohol at potentially dangerous levels at least once a year	Overweight or obese, based on height and weight	Food insecurity, where safe, nutritious and culturally appropriate food not available	Currently smoking
Campaspe	61.0%	69.1%	9.6%	15.9%
Loddon Campaspe Region	58.1%	62.5%	9.2%	10.6%
Victoria	41.8%	49.1%	6.2%	16.7%

Table 1. General health of Campaspe residents (Source: Community Health and Wellbeing Profile, 2020)



**YOUR THOUGHTS**

- What are the implications of the population trends for the Campaspe community?
- What do you think are the key factors that contribute to the health and wellbeing issues in Campaspe, and how can we address them?

**Read More**

- Campaspe Shire Council Community Profile, .idcommunity: <https://profile.id.com.au/campaspe/home>
- Campaspe Council Plan 2021-2025, Shire of Campaspe: <https://www.campaspe.vic.gov.au/files/assets/public/strategies-and-plans/council-plan.pdf>
- Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan, Shire of Campaspe: <https://www.campaspe.vic.gov.au/files/assets/public/strategies-and-plans/municipal-health-and-wellbeing-plan.pdf>
- 2019 Active Living Census, Shire of Campaspe: <https://www.campaspe.vic.gov.au/files/assets/public/our-services/alc-selected-findings-report.pdf>

Land Use

Where is Campaspe, and how are we distributed?

- The Shire of Campaspe is located in north central Victoria, approximately 180 kilometres north of Melbourne. It covers a land area of approximately 4,500 square kilometres.
- The Campaspe region has a strong and rich Aboriginal culture and history. Campaspe is the traditional lands of Dja Dja Wurrung, Taungurung, and Yorta Yorta peoples.
- It comprises many townships, including Echuca, Kyabram, Rochester, Rushworth, Lockington, Gunbower, Stanhope, Colbinabbin, Girgarre, Toolleen, and Tongala (Figure 1).
- The majority of the population lives in Echuca or Kyabram (70%). Echuca is anticipated to double in population over the next 30 years due to the recent approval of Echuca West Precinct Structure Plan. Mid-sized towns are important hubs for social connection, infrastructure and services, active recreation, industrial manufacturing and commercial provision.
- There is approximately one person per every 12 hectares of land.

How do we use the land, and who owns it?

- The majority of the land is used for agriculture, dairy and sheep farming, cereal and grain growing.
- The majority of land is privately owned (86%), with 12% reserved as Crown Land (such as State parks, reserves, and National parks), and less than 2% are road reserves. Of this land, only 2.2% is owned or managed by Campaspe Shire Council.
- Around 10% of land in Campaspe remains a natural environment which includes Box Ironbark and Red River Gum forests, woodlands and grasslands and rare fauna. The landform features numerous significant waterways and basins that contain as well as connect to high biodiversity habitats. They contain areas of cultural heritage, often utilised for agricultural irrigation, recreation and tourism.

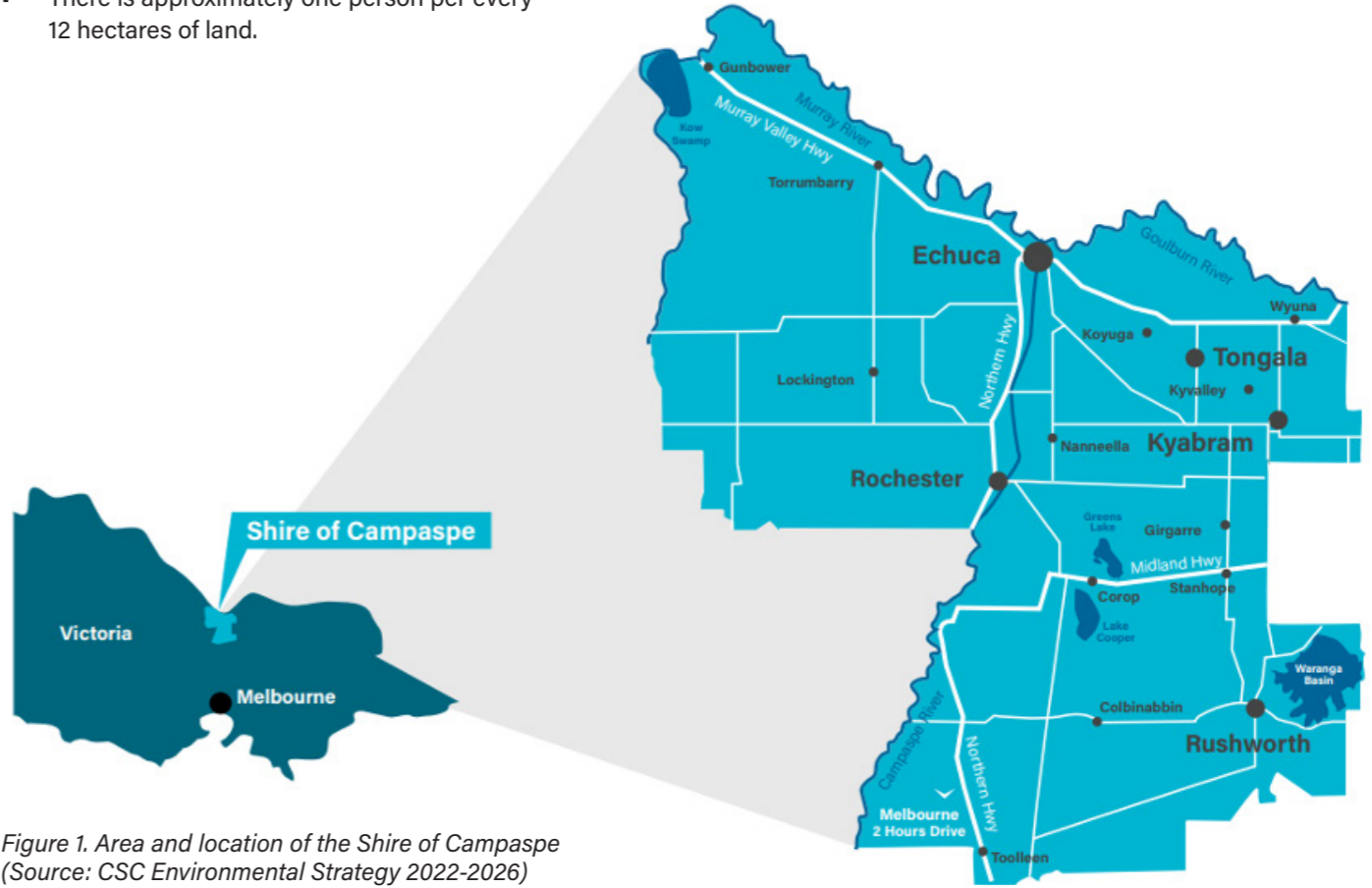


Figure 1. Area and location of the Shire of Campaspe (Source: CSC Environmental Strategy 2022-2026)

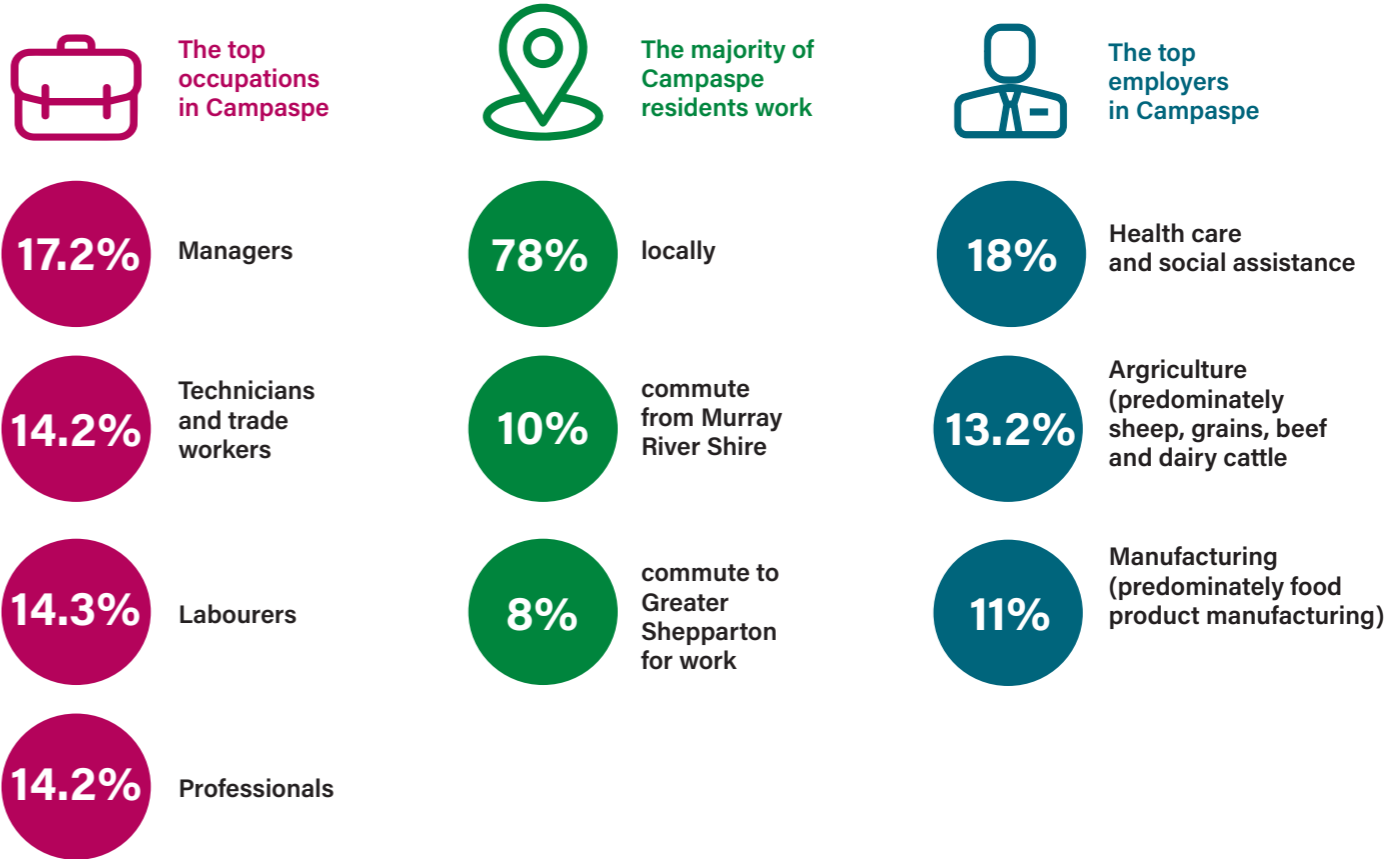
# Industry and employment

What are the key industries that drive Campaspe's economy?

- In 2023, Campaspe's total economic output was valued at \$6 billion.** The top industries are manufacturing (25%), agriculture, forestry and fishing (14%), and construction (14%).
- Food production and processing are key contributors to economic output, exports and jobs.** This includes beef and dairy production, dairy processing, fruit, vegetables and wine.
- Retail and hospitality (including accommodation and food services) support the large population, workforce and visitor base in Campaspe,** contributing to 6.1% of economic output.
- The health, social and education sectors contribute 11% of economic output in Campaspe,** they also provide essential services that support the liveability and community wellbeing of Campaspe.
- There are 4,500 businesses in Campaspe,** 30% relate to agriculture, forestry and fishing, 17% in construction, and 7% in rental, hiring, and real estate services.
- 35% of businesses in Campaspe are small to medium enterprises** (with less than 200 full-time employees), and **98% of all businesses are considered non-employing,** ongoing support will be required to promote business growth and development.

## Who are the main employers of Campaspe?

From 2016 to 2021, healthcare and social assistance were the top contributors to job growth, adding 567 jobs, while manufacturing positions declined by 262 jobs.



## How do we work with surrounding municipalities?

Campaspe is part of the Loddon Campaspe Regional Partnership, as well as Murray Regional Tourism, working with surrounding municipalities on regional opportunities.

- Loddon Campaspe Regional Partnership** was established by the Victorian Government to foster collaboration between local communities, councils, and the state government. It focuses on regional priorities, including economic development, health, education, and infrastructure. Campaspe Shire works with neighbouring municipalities like Bendigo, Macedon Ranges, and Loddon to address shared challenges such as skills shortages, housing, and regional connectivity.
- Murray Regional Tourism** is a collaborative initiative involving local councils along the Murray River, including Campaspe Shire. This body supports the development and promotion of the tourism industry in the region, leveraging shared resources to market the Murray River as a key attraction. It helps local businesses grow through initiatives like strategic planning, industry training, and event promotion.
- Murray River Group of Councils** is a local government advocacy group in northern Victoria comprising the Mayors and CEOs of six Victorian Councils – Mildura, Swan Hill, Gannawarra, Loddon, Campaspe and Moira.

What are the economic trends and opportunities?

In 2024, Council published the **Campaspe Economic Development and Tourism Strategy**, which analyses the social and economic issues and opportunities faced by Campaspe, and outlines a roadmap to drive sustainable economic growth and reliance across the Shire. The identified priorities include:

- 

**Strengthening agriculture** related business and food processing as economic anchors.
- 

**Expanding the visitor economy**, focusing on heritage, eco-tourism, and regional attractions.
- 

**Encouraging business innovation** and supporting small enterprises.
- 

**Promoting renewable energy** and sustainable practices for long-term resilience.
- 

**Diversifying the economy** by fostering growth in advanced manufacturing and other emerging industries.

How do our towns contribute to the community?

Campaspe Shire has a distinct hierarchy of towns contributing to the community and industry:

- **Echuca as the regional centre** – the primary location for services, amenities and infrastructure, catering to the municipality and surrounding towns.
- **Kyabram and Rochester as services centres** – provide key employment, social and community services to surrounding communities.
- **Small rural townships as local service providers** – including Colbinabbin, Gunbower, Girgarre, Lockington, Rushworth, Stanhope and Tongala, support industry and the community with a selection of local services and amenities.



YOUR THOUGHTS

- How do you think the emerging opportunities could impact the Campaspe community?
- What challenges do you think Campaspe would face in adapting to global trends, such as shifting workforce demands?

Read More

- Economic overview, Shire of Campaspe: <https://www.campaspe.vic.gov.au/Business/Business-investment/Economic-overview>
- Campaspe Economic Development and Tourism Strategy 2024, Shire of Campaspe: <https://www.campaspe.vic.gov.au/files/assets/public/v/1/strategies-and-plans/2024-2029-campaspe-economic-development-tourism-strategy-cedts-report.pdf>
- REMPLAN, regional economic modeling program for Campaspe: <https://app.remplan.com.au/campaspe/economy/summary>
- Loddon Campaspe Regional Partnership, Regional Development Victoria: <https://www.rdv.vic.gov.au/regional-partnerships/loddon-campaspe>



Environment and sustainability

What are the main landscape features of Campaspe Shire?

- **Campaspe is characterised by a flat landscape** that slopes to the north. There is variation in vegetation types across the plains and river valleys, from plains grasslands to woodlands to River Red Gum floodplains, which provide habitat for native fauna, including mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, fish and invertebrates.
- **Main waterways in the Campaspe Shire include the Campaspe River, the Goulburn River and the Murray River**, which forms the northern boundary of the Shire, providing vital water resources and supporting tourism and recreational activities.
- Some wetland areas in Campaspe are linked to the Campaspe and Murray rivers and the surrounding floodplains. **Wetland areas are essential in supporting local biodiversity and supporting agricultural activities.**
- **The Campaspe River is the major waterway** in the catchment flowing over 220 kilometres north from its headwaters near Woodend to its junction with the Murray River at Echuca. The Campaspe River flows through townships including Kyneton, Elmore, Rochester and Echuca. The Campaspe's major tributary is the Coliban River, which flows from Trentham through the three water storages (Upper Coliban, Lauriston and Malmsbury reservoirs) before reaching Lake Eppalock. Other significant tributaries include the Axe, Mclvor, Mount Pleasant, Wild Duck and Pipers creeks.
- **The Campaspe River has high environmental values due to its connection to the Murray River**, its iconic River Red Gum communities and native fish population, including Murray Cod and Golden Perch. It also supports various recreational activities along its length, including camping, fishing, canoeing or kayaking, swimming, waterskiing, bird watching, walking and picnicking.



What are the environmental challenges faced by Campaspe?



**Campaspe Shire is becoming warmer and drier due to climate change**, and this is likely to continue. Since 1950, the average temperature in the Loddon Mallee region has increased 1.2-1.4°C, and annual rainfall has declined between 100-200 millimetres. Without climate action, by 2050, Campaspe can expect a 3°C increase in average maximum temperature, twice as many days above 38°C, increased extreme rainfall and flooding events with increased intensity and longer fire seasons with a 62% increase in very high danger days. The Climate Council identified the Nicholls Federal electorate as the most at-risk from climate change, estimating that 26.5% of its properties could become uninsurable by 2030.



**In 2019, the Victorian Government published Climate-Ready Victoria – Loddon Mallee report** to outline how climate change will affect the Loddon Mallee region, including Campaspe, and ways to be climate-ready. Climate trends that are likely to continue in the region include an increase in temperature year round, more hot days and warm spells, fewer frosts, less rainfall in autumn, winter, and spring, more frequent and more intense downpours, as well as harsher fire weather and longer fire seasons.



**Decline in river health and biodiversity in the Murray-Darling Basin** due to flow regulation and over-extraction is a challenge. This has resulted in a loss of habitat and native vegetation. Many of the rivers and creeks in north central Victoria are ‘flow-stressed’ because too much water was extracted for other uses and natural flow patterns changed so dramatically. There is a need for a balance between how much water we take out for industry, agriculture and domestic use and that which is left in the river system to maintain the environment.



**Managing the impacts of water recovery is potentially the biggest challenge for Campaspe and surrounds.** Access to water is the basis of our agricultural industry; a balanced and careful implementation of the Murray Darling Basin Plan is required to ensure the best possible environmental, social, economic and cultural outcomes are delivered.



**Ongoing loss of habitat reducing native flora and fauna.** Campaspe Shire is home to 48 native flora species and 46 native fauna, including Spiney Rice-flower and the Plains Wanderer. While large-scale clearing of native vegetation no longer occurs in the shire, continued incremental losses have adverse consequences for biodiversity and the functioning of ecosystems.

What actions are we taking to address the challenges?

Council's Environment Strategy sets out the key actions to address environmental challenges in Campaspe, with a focus on:

- **Campaspe is working to reduce its power usage and greenhouse gas emissions** by 665 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent annually as part of the Watts Working Better Street Lighting Project and a further 260,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent annually by purchasing 100% renewable power through the Victorian Energy Collaboration.
- **We have reduced our waste to landfills across the Shire by implementing a garden organics service and are further reducing it through a targeted waste education behaviour change program.**
- **Council has installed solar in key buildings** such as Echuca Library (100kW) and Echuca Basketball Stadium (60kW of solar and 30kW battery storage), and a further 300kW in other community buildings with over 60kW of battery storage.
- **Council has developed an Urban Forest Plan to increase the canopy cover in urban areas.**
- **Council continues to deliver the Roadside Weed and Pest Program to control weeds and pests** and support native vegetation and provides ongoing training for Council staff to learn about best management practices for native vegetation and weed management.
- **The Rural Tree Scheme** continues to support rural landholders to increase biodiversity through the purchase of plants.



YOUR THOUGHTS

- What are your observations about the environmental issues and challenges faced by Campaspe?
- How can the Campaspe community address these challenges together?

Read More

- Environment Strategy 2022-2026, Shire of Campaspe: <https://www.campaspe.vic.gov.au/files/assets/public/v/1/strategies-and-plans/environment-strategy-2022-2026.pdf>
- Climate-ready Victoria – Loddon Mallee, Victorian State Government (2019): [https://www.climatechange.vic.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0023/60746/Loddon-Mallee.pdf](https://www.climatechange.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0023/60746/Loddon-Mallee.pdf)

# Transport and access

## How is Campaspe connected by road?

- **Campaspe Shire is connected by a road network supporting local traffic and regional freight movement** (Figure 2). Road freight is crucial for local agriculture, with increased demand due to improved agricultural efficiency.
- Council maintains a road network of over 4,000 kilometres, including 1,171 kilometres of sealed roads, 2,058 kilometres of gravel roads, and 825 kilometres of earth roads. The Murray Valley Highway and Northern Highway are key transport corridors linking Campaspe to Melbourne, Bendigo, and other regional centres, as well as New South Wales.

## How is Campaspe connected by rail?

- The Echuca rail line connects to Melbourne, with services increasing in frequency. The Bendigo and Echuca Line Upgrade was completed in August 2023, which saves journey time for up to 12 minutes with increased speed in trains and adjustments to the timetable.
- The freight rail network connects Bendigo, Echuca, Swan Hill, and Maryborough, which helps to reduce reliance on road transport and increase transport capacity and efficiency.

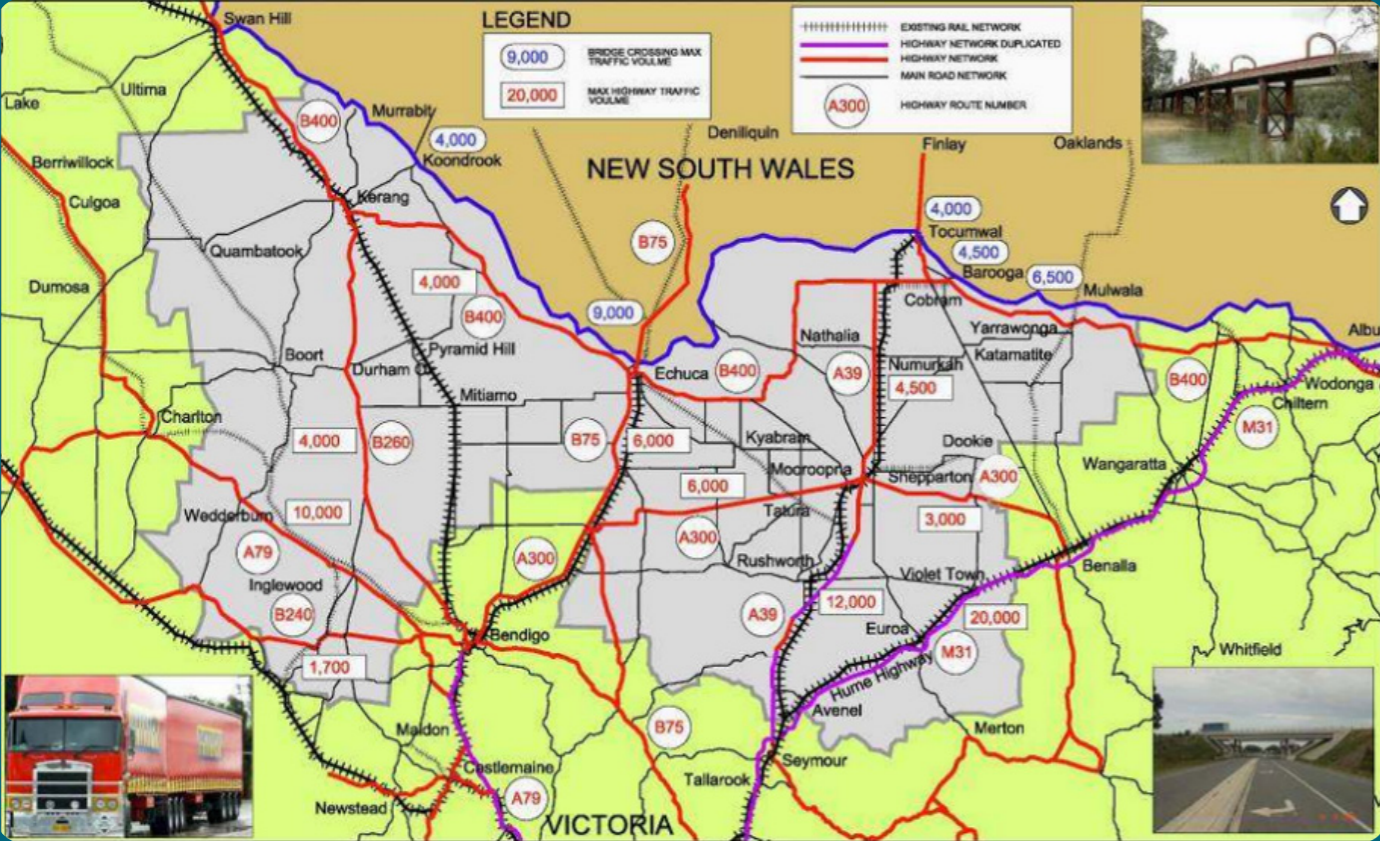


Figure 2: Existing highways showing route numbers and traffic volumes (Source: Northern Victoria Regional Transport Strategy, 2009)

## What are the transport connection and access challenges and opportunities in Campaspe?



**Public transport services in Campaspe are inadequate to connect communities** in smaller towns with larger and regional centres. Local bus route reviews are overdue to keep pace with development.



**Promoting walking and cycling is a key goal for Campaspe to increase connectivity in the Shire.** Encouraging the use of active transport can improve access to employment, education, and social opportunities, bring health benefits to the community, and ensure safer, more accessible services and facilities for all.



**Council supports the redevelopment of the Echuca Rail Precinct** to facilitate more integrated transport services, including urban bus service at the rail service, encourage commercial and residential development on surplus rail land, and increase investment and employment opportunities in the precinct.



Council developed the **Active Transport Strategy** to guide decision-making and investment to increase the number of people walking and cycling in Campaspe. The strategy recognises the current gaps in active transport and identifies opportunities to improve active transport connection to schools, within towns, key destinations and new developments. The strategy takes a 'step change' approach, outlining short to long-term actions to build momentum and leverage opportunities to encourage active transport. A 'gold standard' approach is also identified to prepare a business case to implement change.



**The Campaspe economy is driven by primary industry (i.e. agricultural and manufacturing)** - the importance of the road network to support movement of produce and goods within and to markets outside the Shire is critical.



### YOUR THOUGHTS

- What are the transport challenges that Campaspe should address in the next four years?
- How do you think improved active transport in Campaspe will support the community?
- What actions do you think are required to improve transport connections in Campaspe?

### Read More

- Active Transport Strategy, Shire of Campaspe (2019): <https://www.campaspe.vic.gov.au/files/assets/public/strategies-and-plans/active-transport-strategy.pdf>
- Northern Victoria Regional Transport Strategy, VicRoads (2009): <https://www.campaspe.vic.gov.au/files/assets/public/strategies-and-plans/northern-victoria-regional-transport-strategy.pdf>
- Advocacy Priorities 2021-2025, Shire of Campaspe (2021): <https://www.campaspe.vic.gov.au/files/assets/public/strategies-and-plans/advocacy-priorities-2021-2025.pdf>

Services and facilities

What services are available in Campaspe?

A range of services are available in Campaspe, including:

- 

**Child and Family Services** - including kindergartens, daycare centres, and supported playgroups.
- 

**Waste Management** - comprehensive waste and recycling programs aim to minimise environmental impact.
- 

**Emergency Services and Recovery** - resources for flood recovery and resilience building to support impacted communities.
- 

**Community support and programs** - including grants and award programs to foster community connection and community development.

What facilities are available in Campaspe?

- There is a network of community facilities, managed by Council or other service providers to encourage connectivity and an active lifestyle:
- 

**Community spaces** – Campaspe has nine community centres, 12 senior citizens' clubs, and 19 public halls for the community to gather and participate in events and activities.
- 

**Recreational Spaces** – there are over 40 parks and recreation reserves in Campaspe, with amenities like playgrounds, sporting fields, and walking tracks. There are 8 indoor and outdoor public swimming pools across towns like Kyabram and Echuca.
- 

**Libraries and Cultural Centers** – Campaspe has five public libraries with modern facilities, including reading pods and public programs. The Foundry Arts Space and Echuca Historical Port Precinct offer spaces for regional and local arts, music, and other events.

Asset and financial management

What does asset management mean for Campaspe?

- Councils manage, maintain, renew, and upgrade community assets to ensure they remain safe, fit for purpose, and meet current and future community needs.
- Asset refers to the tangible, fixed infrastructure owned by Council, including:
  - Road network, including roads listed on Council's Register of Public Roads, constructed pathways and shared paths, bridges and culverts
  - Buildings
  - Footpaths
  - Drainage
  - Recreation, such as sports infrastructure and playground equipment.
- Council Asset Plan provides a 10-year strategic outlook to guide Council's approach to managing assets, including maintenance, renewal, acquisition, expansion, upgrade, disposal, and decommissioning.

How does Council manage its finances?

- The Council Financial Plan outlines the long-term budget for all of Council's responsibilities. It is a flexible model that adjusts based on the decisions made. The plan includes capital costs, land acquisitions or sales, lifecycle costs of new assets, and future operational costs.
- The Council Annual Budget details how resources will be allocated to fund strategic initiatives, ongoing services and programs, and capital works. According to the Local Government Act, Councils must develop, adopt, and maintain a budget by the end of June each year. This budget supports the delivery of the Council Plan, other strategies, and services.
- According to the 2024 budget, the top three spendings by Council for every \$100 are road services (\$26.63), economic development (\$10.54), and organisational support (\$10.15) (Figure 4).
- Council's top three sources of income are rates (42%), user fees (16%), and grants commission (14%) (Figure 3).

Council's sources of income

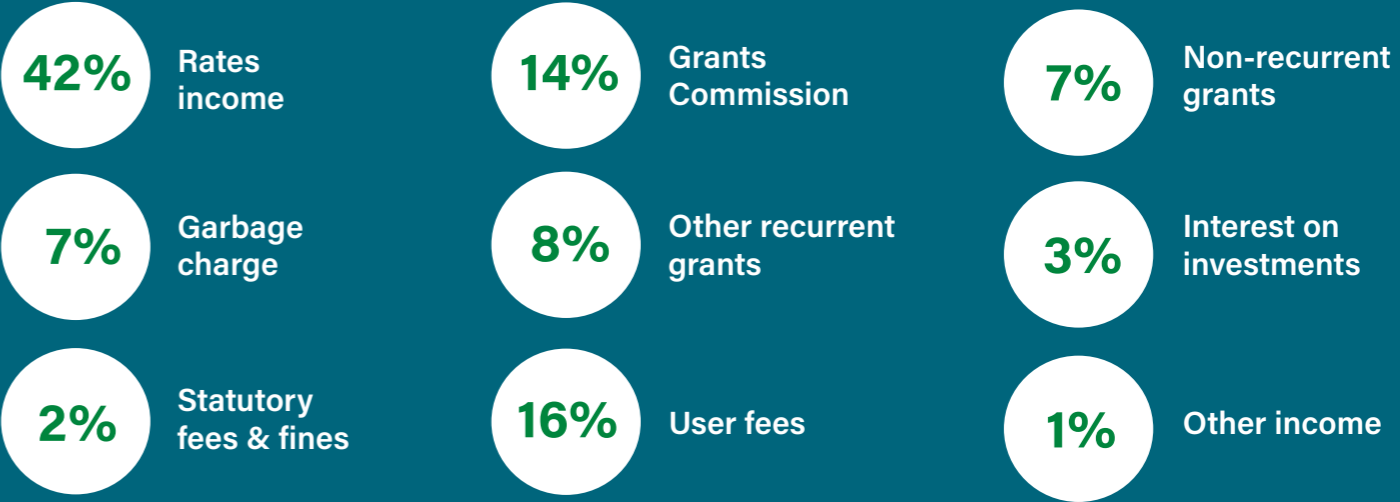



Figure 3: Council's sources of income



**YOUR THOUGHTS**

- What services and facilities will Campaspe need to prioritise over the next four years?

**Read More**

- Our services, Campaspe Shire Council: <https://www.campaspe.vic.gov.au/Our-services>

Council's expenditure allocation per \$100



Figure 4: Council expenditure allocation per \$100

**YOUR THOUGHTS**

What do you think are the most important assets that Council should prioritise in its long-term financial planning?

**Read More**

- Asset Plan, Campaspe Shire Council:  
<https://www.campaspe.vic.gov.au/files/assets/public/v/3/strategies-and-plans/asset-plan-2022-2032.pdf>
- Financial Plan 2021/22 to 2030/31, Campaspe Shire Council:  
<https://www.campaspe.vic.gov.au/files/assets/public/strategies-and-plans/financial-plan-2021-22-to-2030-31.pdf>
- Council Budget 2024-25, Campaspe Shire Council:  
<https://www.campaspe.vic.gov.au/files/assets/public/v/2/our-council/council-budget-2024-25.pdf>

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